

more conclusive evidence had that been the primary object of an exhaustive bibliographical research. It seems that before Linnaeus' work appeared, the plant he called *Ornithogalum hirsutum* had been described and in some cases figured by at least six different authors, and that four of these descriptions and two of the figures Linnaeus cited when he published the name. This constitutes as clear a case of actual publication as it is possible to have, and by a method which has been practiced by botanists everywhere and at all times. All the species in Linnaeus' *Species Plantarum* were published in essentially the same manner. If one were to publish a statement of the main facts in the life of George Washington, citing the dates of his birth and death, the battles in which he was engaged, and the official records of his actions while president, and should conclude "therefore, in view of these facts, it is evident that George Washington is a myth," he would not be drawing a more erroneous conclusion than Mr. Holm when he says that *Ornithogalum hirsutum* is a *nomen nudum*.

If *Ornithogalum hirsutum* L. is not a *nomen nudum*, not only is it permissible to retain the specific name when the plant is transferred to the genus *Hypoxis*, but under the rules it is mandatory to do so. It should be noted further that when Linnaeus in the second edition of the *Species Plantarum* placed this plant in *Hypoxis*, he cited first the *Ornithogalum hirsutum* of the earlier edition, followed by the same four citations he had used under that name, and no others.—FREDERICK V. COVILLE, *Washington, D. C.*

THE TROPICAL LABORATORY COMMISSION.

To the Editors of the Botanical Gazette:—The editorial reference to the finality of the decision of the tropical laboratory commission in the GAZETTE for February renders it proper to say that the commission is most willingly amenable to advice and suggestions and will welcome any assistance which will enable it to perform the duties it has undertaken, to the best advantage of all botanical interests. It may prevent misconceptions of the status of the commission and of the proposed laboratory, however, to state that the commission is a technically independent body, and that its decisions and action are not subject to revision by any existing organization, botanical or otherwise.

The recent absence of the writer from his address and the extended delays in Atlantic mails will make it impossible to announce the foreign membership before the tour of exploration begins.

In the course of the correspondence concerning the matter, letters have been received from a large number of botanists who have visited equatorial America. The following extract from a letter from Professor Goebel is a fair index of opinion concerning the nature and value of the proposed station: . . . "and without doubt it (the tropical laboratory) will be of the very

greatest importance to the science, and will give a strong impulse to the study of botany in America. . . . It appears to me particularly desirable that the laboratory should be placed near a botanical garden, because of the greater number of plant-forms available, besides the herbarium and library as well as the opportunities for experimental culture afforded. Furthermore, another important condition would be the location of the laboratory as near as possible to a primitive forest. This would be of especial importance in researches upon cryptogams. If at all possible the main station should be in the highlands, with a subsidiary laboratory in the lowlands or on the seashore for the study of algæ, and the vegetation of tropical plains."

Professor Goebel furthermore advocates the selection of a locality easily accessible, and central to other areas offering advantageous conditions for research and exploration. So far as the general factors are concerned, botanical opinion seems united on the above points and the general policy of the commission as outlined in previous communications.—D. T. MACDOUGAL, *University of Minnesota.*